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TWENTY-ONE

MULFORD DOUGHTY

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TWENTY-ONE

MULFORD DOUGHTY

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MY FATHER

To one who steadfastly through weary years
Has kept his faith in all things good and true,
May the days bring you gladness, dry all tears,
My Father! How I love and honor you.

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TWENTY-ONE

THE WITCH

The things I do beneath the sun are what all men
may show.
The things I do beneath the moon a fiend alone
may know.

In the sweet fields where dead men lie in never end-
ing rows,
I go at noon of night to write a message to my foes.

My pen is formed from dead men's bones and
bravely it will write
Of fools who perished, that a land might grow in
strength and might.

My ink the blood that from their veins has sodden
all the earth.
No crop will spring from that fell soil, but hope-
less want and dearth.

Only the Devil rules and he is strong to guard his
own;
For him I toil and laugh to see the strong men sob
and moan.

Never since Earth begot the race, has such great
joy been mine;
On, on they come, an endless tide in that long bat-
tle line.

Soon the sun sinks behind the hills, the grim hills,
stark and bare.
Then comes the night. Oh I shall write, there's
pen and ink to spare.

THE AISNE

1913-1915

We walked together by the shining river
When twilight hours, the gray nuns of the day,
Lingered about us with their benediction
And the sweet flowers bent their heads to pray.

We walked together by the sullen river
The twilight hours, grim sentries of the night,
Roared over us a ghastly vesper service
For souls that perished since the dawn of light.

THE TEMPLE

There is a Temple grim
The atmosphere is dim
  For the great altar smokes by night, by day.
The mighty organ rolls
The anthems for the souls
  Of men who briefly in that service stay.

The sacrifice of blood
Pours out a costly flood,
  The blood of youth, blood of the brave and fair.
Oh, high and glorious fate
Who in that Temple wait!
  In life, in death, a crown of bay will wear

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

Song of a fair May morning
When the sky is bluer than blue
And the white clouds floating across it
Seem almost too white to be true,
When the air is sweet with clover,
And hums with the busy bee,
And across the gray salt marshes,
The guns thunder out to the sea,
And the dead lie in rows
With their face to the foes
Only a mile from me.

A WOMAN'S PART

I am restless to-night and the house can not hold
me,
I go out on the terrace and look at the stars.
How long is it, Love, since we stood here together
And your arm held me close as you pointed out
Mars?

The red star of war rules the stars of the sky,
The red god of war rules the kingdoms of earth.
All day I have toiled at grim food for the guns,
Bombs, dynamite, cartridges there is no dearth.

You toil in the trenches, I toil in the shops,
The two halves of the whole, we are winning the
fight.
But, Oh God, if once more I could feel your strong
arms
Hold me close and the scorch of your lips through
the night.

THE BALKANS, 1912

Across blue sky, white clouds are drifting slow.
I sit here in the garden drinking tea.
A fresh breeze blows the green leaves to and fro,
And melody of bird and hum of bee
Are mingled with the sweetness of the air.
All things about me are so fresh and fair,
My mind dreams idly in this pleasant spot;
Strange fancies come of ages long forgot,
Clangor of arms and clash of steel I hear,
And those who died full many years ago;
Behold I see them pass who know not fear.

Brave knights ride by me, cased in flashing steel,
Above their heads, strange banners whip the air,
Ragged and torn from many a distant field,
That once shone bright with gold and purple rare.
And now with stern, unhappy faces come marching
ranks of captive races;
And as I gaze, my eyes are filled with tears.
The martial music faints upon my ears,
For far away, in lands forlorn,
Women must weep and little children starve
Amid the ruined fields of trampled corn.

The clouds have drifted far across the sky,
And in the West a glorious sunset shines.
Slowly the crimson fades before my eyes
And all the air is sweet with vesper chimes;
But as I leave this fair and haunted place
And meet the present once more, face to face,
I pray, O God of Nations, may thy car
An emblem be of peace, and not of war.
Load it with harvests of the yellow grain
The crimson apple and the purple grape,
And peace, a banner, float without a stain.

FULFILLMENT

My Love is coming to-night
He is coming at last, My King.
I must dress in robes of state,
In a robe of satin, white as snow,
In a mantle of velvet, the color, and glow
Of the rose, when summer is late.

He is coming to-night, My King.

For this I have lived my life;
All of the hours and the days
When I toiled in the desolate ways,
When youth called aloud in the strife.

He is coming to-night, My King.

His lips will be pressed to mine
In a bridal kiss divine
And in the fire of his eyes,
The blue of the midnight skies.
I will give him my heart at last
Oh Death, My Lover, My King.

OUT OF THE SEA

Out into the dusk of the winding lanes that lead to
the old gray sea,
Out into the purple twilight, for a voice is call-
ing me.
Not for me the flickering hearthfire, but the salt
of the ocean foam,
For a voice in the night wind's calling, calling to
me alone.

Up from the harbor rolls the fog, obscuring house
and tree,
And with it come the souls of men, and one is there
for me.
I can not choose but follow the voice that calls me
on,
For what to me are living men, when the one I love
is gone?

I can not choose but meet him, my Love from out
the sea,
And naught care I for mortal men, however brave
they be.
Out of the sea-mist calling, out of the ocean gray,
Into the arms of my lover and the great waves of
the Bay.

SPRING

The fires of the spring flame upward
(Oh heart of my love)
Crush me closer, yet closer,
No gentleness of a dove)
Thy flesh against mine,
And to see in thy eyes the divine
Light of passion and power and desire.

May the grace of my face feed the fire
(Oh love, let it glow)
Forgotten all else in that light
(Are the hours fast or slow?)
To my softness, the strength and the might
Of thy arms; to my weakness, the sight
Of the storm of thy love, sweeping low.

ECHOES

Is it your voice that calls across the fields of shining
asphodel?
Is it your voice I hear or the faint chime of distant
bell?
What is the message you would give to-day?
(Oh hush, my heart, beat not so loud, I pray),
What message for the one who loved you well?

I listened and the soft winds stirred the leaves,
Sadly they murmured like the voice of one who
grieves.
Afar on some green branch in moaning tone
A purple wood-dove sang her song alone,
And my heart ached for grief, again deceived.

NIGHT

I dreamed of you last night; I felt your hands, hot
on my breast,
Once more as in the days of old, I felt your
strong caress;
I saw again the passion in your eyes, the love and
fire.
And felt in that red light, the scorching touch of
our desire.

I woke; the night was black, and wild as deepest
Hell:
The great winds roared above the house like
fiends, and the rains fell.
Within that quiet room with me was one who slept
in peace,
And my whole soul cried out for Death to come
with swift release.

SUNSET GARDENS

The gardens of the western skies to-night
Are gleaming bright,
And all the flowers of Heaven
Are opening to the light.

Upon the right a bed of roses
Glows with a crimson flame,
While up upon the northern border
White clouds of lilies reign.

Midway of this enchanted garden
A small lake glimmers green,
About the edge the golden primrose
And purple iris lean.

Softly the winds of twilight blowing
Scatter the heavenly flowers,
Drifts of golden and crimson petals
Falling in rainbow showers.

Changing, fading to pearl and silver
Dissolved at last in the evening air,
And where they vanished a star is shining
Like a lost dewdrop, bright and fair.

TWILIGHT

The shadows of the evening come trooping through
the pinewoods;
Come peering, come creeping, along the shining
floor;
The soft gray shadows, the long gray shadows,
Come gliding in among the trees when the bright
day is o'er.

The long gray aisles are lost in mist that drapes
each stately column,
And the plumed branches cease to wave, and silent
droop above;
The thick black shadows, the great black shadows,
Come thronging through the silent wood, as to a
home they love.

DUSK

The day is done, the sun is set,
The purple dusk is dropping down.
Above the little golden stars
Reflect the bright lights of the town.

VISIONS

Winds of the past are blowing through the pine
woods,
Echoes of days that were long years ago.
The sun is sinking and the shadows lengthen,
Dark shadows soft and slow.

The light is dim, no longer glad and golden,
For now the ghosts walk underneath the trees.
Murmurs of voices asking and replying
Faint as the evening breeze among the leaves.

Wreathes of gray mist float silently about them,
The twilight deepens from the marshes far
And near; the frogs begin their evening chorus,
Above unchanging shines a distant star.

WAR

All day I lie upon the beach and watch
The white battalions of the ocean charge,
Rank behind thunderous rank.
Upon my glowing cheek I feel the touch
Of their salt banners hissing through the air;
And in my ears resounds the martial tread
Of that imperial army.
Up the strand against the mighty fortress of the rocks,
In vain they hurl their innumerable troops.
No quarter given, or asked in this grim war
That rages on until the end of time.

NANTUCKET

The blue and gold are gone; twilight is falling;
Through the soft dusk I hear far voices calling.
Voices of women, and of men
Who unseen walk the streets again.
The gray fog rolls in from the sea
Invades the town; from tree to tree
You can not see your way about
So thick it is, no lights shine out.
But still those plaintive voices whispering, calling
Each unto each when the black night is falling,
For that brief time the blind man's holiday
Alone is theirs; in which once more to play
The game of life, and in the crooked lanes
Renew the memories of their joys and pains.

To stand on the desolate seacoast
With the roar of the waves in my ears.
To look northward or southward or westward
But no human being appears.
To live in this rude cabin
Where in winter I freeze with the cold
And in summer I faint from the blistering heat,
And never again to behold
The home I have left.
Oh my heart breaks!
It is rent with the longing and pain
To walk once again in the garden,
To pick the sweet flowers and hearken
To the nightingale's longing refrain.

Let the strong men who care not for trifles
Come here to this desert alone,
Let them storm against tyrants and priestcraft
Let them argue of tables of stone.
Shall I ever again see the table of oak in the old hall at home?
Where at morning and noon and at nightfall
We gathered with laughter and song?
Never more shall I see it, Oh never behold, the green grass on the lawn,
Or hear the sweet song of the skylark,
When the fields shine with dew at the dawn.

THE PEDDLER

To J. F.

Sunrise, birdsong in the pleasant weather.
Lightheart, lightfoot, take the Broad Highway
Selling duster, broom, or brush to bonny lass or matron.
Oh, it's very well to tramp along upon a summer day.

But how about the evening when the sun's gone out?
When birds are silent in their nests until another day,
When long black shadows lurk about before you and behind,
It's weary hearts and weary heels that trudge the Broad Highway.

DISILLUSION

O child with your innocent eyes and your loving heart
Ready with eager hands to open the door of life,
Ready with fearless feet to tread the path of the years,
What do you hope to find in a world of sorrow and strife?

Do you think because you are young and happy and brave
Do you think if your heart is pure, that sin will pass you by?
Careless of other's failures, sure that for you there will be
Love and strength and courage, do you not hear a cry?

A cry of exceeding sorrow, a cry of a shattered dream!
Did you think, poor fool, that for you the rules of the world would be changed?
Discard all love of beauty, tenderness, faith, and truth,
Be hard and grasping and selfish, and the world will not seem strange.

SONG

Some sing of life, its smiles, its tears,
Sing of the sunshine gilding happy years,
The flowers of pleasure with their fragrance sweet
Make glad the way for their swift dancing feet.
Some sing of Life.

Some sing of Death, the lover whose embrace
Is rapture beyond telling; in whose face,
Yearning above them with its shining light,
Light of the stars draws them to sacred night.
Some sing of Death.

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